

Notes on Crisis Patterns, related to CII  
7 February 1989, 7AM

Pattern #1: feints (to intimidate; or to satisfy bureaucratic or domestic critics, the Right) serve as "provocations", spurring adversary preparations for defense or deterrence, or enemy preemptions:

Pearl Harbor

Tonkin Gulf? (leading to movement of NVN troops to SVN?)

Maneuvers in Caribbean, southern US, spring 62

(hst secret preparations for nuclear war in 1951 may have been a feint to satisfy JCAE right-wingers: didn't lead to this

Pattern #2: Deterrent deployments serve as lightning rods, provocations, temptations to attack (if they fail entirely to deter, or are not yet in place or operational), especially in the period of emplacement, while still vulnerable: the deadline on their vulnerability even leads to desperate, "crisis"--hence reckless, violent, secret, small decision-group, emotional, little examination of alternatives--decision-making by opponent, which raises likelihood of reckless, violent, illegal decision (e.g. for secretly-prepared fait accompli, surprise attack):

(Such defensive or deterrent preparations may "provoke" especially the US, which demands an "Open Door to US attack" in its sphere such as the Caribbean: with respect to Cuba, or Nicaragua).

Pearl Harbor, Philippines

Cuban pilots for Migs, scheduled for Cuba in spring 1961, as deterrent to exile attack.

(Potentially, Soviet Migs for Nicaragua, to deter exile contra attack; likewise, Soviet tanks)

Soviet tanks in East Europe, to deter uprising? to deter German attack; but seen as threat, justifying/requiring various defensive preparations and possible preemption.

Small nuclear forces (AJW point: vs. French, or Japanese). (These may, however, actually deter attack, if they do not invite it: see the Chinese nuclear operations, threatened in 1964 and 1969, but perhaps deterrent afterwards).

Soviet buildup, SAMS, and especially missiles in Cuba, summer-fall 1962; (although this led to threats and preparations to attack by US, the deployment may ultimately have deterred these

threats from being carried out; and even have averted a US attack that was otherwise possible, as a culmination of Mongoose or as a response to the Soviet buildup other than SSMs).

Pattern #3: Group cognition, inference, response: 1) an "obvious" alternative is wholly ignored; 2) once raised, or even pressed, an alternative, or hypothesis, is then "lost," treated as if it had never been thought of; 3) a hypothesis is regarded as "impossible"--yet recovered or gets a post prob after surprising evidence (example: atmospheric ignition, Conant; SSMs on Cuba, McCone--example of (2)?; hyp: once a hypothesis is thought of, it never gets exactly zero prior probability--unless "lost";

Is (1) more likely in a group--as a kind of folie a deux? (2) is more likely in a group. Or: is it not that phenomenon is more or less likely in groups or individuals, but that they can occur in either--groups are no safeguard against these forms of individual shortcoming or "madness"; groups have their own ways of coming to these imperfect results. (Groups composed of normal individuals will think of a broader range of hypotheses or alternatives than any but unusually creative individuals--though perhaps less than the latter--yet can still ignore the obvious and become obsessed with wild fantasies, just like individuals, or perhaps--Nietzsche--more commonly, "as a rule", despite greater pressures to calculation, explicitness, "orderly decision-making". And this, not only unorganized crowds (with or without a leader) but in organized bureaucracies (e.g., reflecting and magnifying the preoccupations, priorities, or fantasies of a leader; or exhibiting inertia; or adversarial mode, intensified for initial reasons of group integration).

(Contrary to Nietzsche: is "madness" so exceptional in individuals, or is it also "the rule": at various times, or usually in some respects?

Examples: a) Teller sees and pursues possibility of TN bomb.

b) Atmospheric ignition: almost lost, yet revived by Fermi at last minute: Conant's fear. Initial response to it, then ignored.

c) McCone on prospect of SSMs; rejected as unlikely by his analysts; still more by White House?

d) Alternatives, proposed and "rejected" (yet actually, prepared and acted on): --trade of Turkish missiles (Guantanamo?)

--no-invasion pledge

--invasion of Cuba

--assassination (see JFK discussion with Szulc); continues under JFK; continues after Bay of Pigs (RFK told); continues after Cuba II; (on day of JFK assassination). Stopped by LBJ? (fear of retaliation?)



Pattern #4: Are Lessons Learned? Does Failure Lead to Prudence, or to Desire for Revenge, Vindication, Success?

a) Bay of Pigs actually leads immediately to Mongoose (and updating of invasion plans), and proposals and maneuvers/feints (just part of "pressure"?) in spring and fall of 1962.

This despite JFK public acceptance of responsibility and indications of "seeking lessons, learning lessons," leaked criticism of CIA, firing of Allen Dulles and Bissell; and retrospective claims (Bundy and McNamara in 1987) that "invasion was the last thing from our minds, after Bay of Pigs". (As if U-2 shootdown, and Ike acceptance of responsibility--even though he did claim right to continue--had been in fact followed by repeated U2 flights over SU).

b) Khrushchev face-down in Berlin 1961--exposure of his missile-gap deception!-- (and Quemoy? Laos?) leads toward Cuba II, deception of US, to redress (humiliation?). (Soviets say he wanted to achieve parity: but to what end? Just to avoid loss of Cuba, as he says in memoir? Or for Berlin, as Sovs hinted in 1962 and as JFK Admin thought? Or were hints to tht effect just diversions, cover, and deterrent threats?)

c) Cuba II is followed immediately by great step-up in Mongoose-type raids against Cuba (according to Branch and Crile, Harper's; does Schles claim it is terminated in early 1963? but most of Martinez's 354 raids seem to be after 1962.); and by Kennedy's "pledge" to Brigade in Miami in December 1962, on return of flag to Brigade in a free Havana, in ceremony with returned Bay of Pigs captives. Both, despite supposed anti-invasion pledge to Soviets: (really?) nullified by lack of inspection.

d) Cuba I/Mongoose/Cuba II (invasion plans) are reproduced (planning started under JFK, carried out--including actual invasion--under LBJ, but with exact same team of subordinates) starting just one year later in Vietnam. (check Ernie May, Lessons of History). This despite McNamara's supposedly learning McNamara's Law in Cuba (he must really mean, Vietnam: and now, retrospectively applies it to Cuba, even though apparently he did have some apprehension of it in Cuba).

e) Failure of Track II against Allende, 1970, is followed secretly by continuation and intensification of Track II (and Brazilian model; with elements of Djakarta. Despite public protestations of US resignation, acceptance.

f) Failure of US to uphold Somoza or National Guard solution leads Carter to preemptive reformist coup in El Salvador; later, toward an "early Vietnam" strategy in El Salvador. And Reagan doesn't give up on Nicaragua, launches contras. --like Cuba I/Mongoose; like 34A versus NVN. (Graham and Bundy both say, on Kwitny show, "There is no analogy between Nicaragua and Vietnam, nothing to be learned from Vietnam"! "forgetting" 34A, and mining of NVN.))

g) Cuba II is followed by Dom Rep invasion in 1965: despite claim, "After Cuba I--rejection of invasion even then--the last thing from our minds, last thing we were willing to contemplate--was a Caribbean invasion." (In retrospect, Soviets could point not only to maneuvers throughout period--how do Bundy and McNamara explain the October 15 invasiion of "Ortsac," or was that just a last-minute cover for invasion preps in case SSMs were discovered?--but to Cuba I 1961, Dom Rep 1965,



and Vietnam 1964 and 1965.)

--Suppose that invasion plans for Cuba in August 23-October 4-October 20 1962 were in response to worries about possible SSMs--or, "big buildup of SSMs, substantial force, that would change balance of power or to which JFK had to respond."

Or: was buildup seen by some--RFK? Why not? --seen as a perfect excuse for invasion? I.e., at least if it led to "plausible US fears of SSMs"?

Yet JFK did veer away from invasion threat, despite Republican pressure: "unless SSMs" (which he didn't expect).

Did JFK (RFK?) really rule out invasion, or feel extreme reluctance to contemplate it--as this indicates, and as would have been wise, and as Bundy and McNamara say now? But in that case, how did they expect Mongoose to succeed, or their hopes to overthrow Castro (Helms, Lansdale) to be accomplished? Or did they just feel they needed adequate excuse for invasion, like preparations for SSMs? If so, why wasn't Soviet "intervention," Soviet base, enough excuse? How hard was Mongoose being pressed in 1962? (Helms says, very hard) To what effect?

Note--in relation to efforts to understand the crisis--how long the ExComm (McNamara, Bundy, Sorensen (where was Schlesinger during the crisis? Kaysen?--on other things, India? where was Goodwin?!)) concealed both: a) Mongoose; b) assassination plans' c) invasion planning. (Still: provocation planning?) And note their tendency still to deprecate it, deny it in the face of new evidence, contradict others who emphasize it, including Soviets. What is the meaning of this?

What is it they were hiding--by super-secrecy, like PSALM, and covering invasion planning in early October--at the time, and still?

Was it just: a higher expectation of SSMs than they wanted to admit to Republicans before the election; b) preparations for case of SSMs, which would seem to indicate evidence or expectations confirming Republican charges (even though White House officials didn't really expect SSMs); c) preparations to carry out surprise attack, while covering it by appearing to contradict Republicans: exactly as Nixon had covered preparations for Bay of Pigs, in 1960, by contradicting JFK's proposals?!; d) preparations to respond after election, if necessary, but to keep the lid on till after election, if possible; e) Persistent secrecy: to hide the resistance of JFK and his advisors to the expectations of their own DCI, McCone--though he was contradicted by his own analysts--and the charges of the Republicans: which in retrospect appears both foolish and over-trusting of the Soviets' prudence and their honesty in their assurances (which were not even fully explicit, till Bolshakov, which was not till the 17th).

(It was false to say, as McG did on October 15, that there was no evidence (did he say, "hard evidence"?). And it is false to imply, later, that there was no serious planning, involving the President and McNamara, for the contingency that SSMs would be deployed or that the US might invade, prior to October 15. Why these lies and concealment?)



Pattern #5: Deterrence of attack on far-distant interests, forces, allies, by first-use nuclear threat: Khrushchev was doing in Cuba--it is now agreed--what I have been claiming the US does frequently in its own interventions! (He was imitating US; as third-countries may later do, as they acquire nuclears: especially if they intervene or define "vital interests" far from their borders). And the dangers of doing so, of making such threats--even if they are bluffs, feints--are well illustrated by Cuba II! (Granted, Khrushchev's move seemed especially reckless; still, he made it, on the basis of some prior evidence that led to an assessment to Kennedy; and his assessment wasn't entirely foolish: Khrushchev almost did get away with it, in the end--almost got a public trade and a no-invasion pledge (even though Kennedy's initial reaction was belligerent, he calmed down!).

Cuba II "shows": Soviet use of FU threat; dangers of FU threat; fact that it can "work" ; fact that it may be tried, and might work, despite an enormous inferiority of strategic nuclear forces; advantage, nevertheless, of strategic superiority, backing up local superiority.

Pattern #6: Wishful effects on beliefs of "back-channel, private" communications. (a) Dobrynin's assurances, deliberately ambiguous (though Dob didn't know it) were both interpreted wishfully (plausibly) and relied on heavily: above McCone's suspicions. Likewise, Bolshakov's assurance--apparently really deceptive, though too late--seems to have been remembered afterward as evidence of clearcut deception earlier, rationalising the US interpretation of Dobrynin's statements.

Conversely, "denied, deniable" US activities like Mongoose and invasion planning, do not appropriately enter the thinking even of those officials who know about them when it comes to interpreting Soviet actions as possible responses to US provocations or threat. (The inability to discuss these possibilities with other US officials who do not know about them, and the need even to avoid hinting at or suggesting these activities to other Americans, may inhibit adequate cognition about these factors even among the secret sharers.) Thus, a focus on Berlin and on the strategic balance, to the almost exclusion of consideration of defense of Cuba (which was consistent with "assurances" by Dobrynin and Gromyko, which actually did mislead and were later regarded as deliberately misleading, discounting Soviet protestations, after the missiles were discovered, that defense of Cuba was the major consideration).

(b) The Fomin message to Scali, saying what US wanted to hear, --which, by the way, the US might have inferred and even advanced itself as a proposal much earlier, if it had not blocked out the actual prior US threat to Cuba and Khrushchev's possible real concern for Cuba (if the USG and ExComm and Pres were really willing, earlier, to give a no-invasion pledge!)--was interpreted wishfully: 1) as coming from Khrushchev (according to Dobrynin, it did not); 2) as the "real meaning" of the first Khrushchev letter, which on its face did not go nearly so far. Thus, there was, and remains to this day, a predilection to see the two K letters as "contradictory" (B/W 217), evidence of a struggle within the Politburo, a toughening: where there is no clearcut contradiction at all, and both seem to have come from Khrushchev.

Still concealed:

1) The actual reactions, e.g., of Nitze, to the revelation of the SSMS on the night of October 15, Monday, before the President had taken a position (that "they must go"): namely, that there was nothing the US could do about it! (answer to Shahnazarov's question, B and W 303, "do no one say that the SU had a right to deploy missiles to Cuba?"!)

2) PSALM, and the earlier super-secrecy from Sept. 7 on.

3) urgency of invasion planning, blockade and airstrike, in early October.

4) Presidential attitude toward urgency, priority of Mongoose, and how it was expected/hoped to overthrow Castro. Latter question arises in the same way over: 34A; (e.g., under JFK); Bay of Pigs planning; contras in Nicaragua; (efforts against Khadafy? under Reagan). Answer might be the same in all cases:

5) Still-secret (?) provocation plans, either to provoke an enemy reaction that would justify invasion or airstrike or blockade,--like the first, real attack on US De Soto patrol in Tonkin Gulf, or Sandinista incursions into Honduran contra camps, or DRV violations of the 1973 ceasefire (actually, provoked by US/GVN violations of the Accords)-- or plans for a fake-provocation, covered by provocative US covert pressures on the enemy (to rationalize an otherwise reckless and inexplicable enemy provocation, like an attack on Guantanamo, or the assassination of the US Ambassador in Costa Rica) (or a second attack on US destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf) (or alleged PAVN moves toward "US troops in SVN" from Cambodia, prior to Cambodian incursion)

(See Sheehan CIA informant on plans for fake attack on Guantamano before Bay of Pigs. Was this supposedly to be done without knowledge of JFK, who would be deceived and compelled to respond? Or, was JFK's failure to intervene in part because this part of plan didn't come off?)